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GOVERNOR BEEBE EXPANDS ARKANSAS WORKS INITIATIVE

**Encourages High School Students to Plan for Education and Careers
Beyond High School, Places College & Career Coaches in Arkansas's Most
Economically Challenged Communities**

LITTLE ROCK (January 13, 2010) – Governor Mike Beebe announced today the second expansion of Arkansas Works, the governor's strategic initiative to coordinate education, training and economic development in Arkansas communities. The new initiative is an expansion of features found in the Arkansas College and Career Planning System, and includes a pilot program that has hired and placed 43 full-time College and Career Coaches in 21 of Arkansas's most economically challenged counties.

The online resources will enable Arkansas students to become more proactive in planning their future education and career success beyond high school. Students, their parents/guardians, and educators can use the system from wherever they have computer access – school, the library, workforce centers or home. Designed to guide

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students through the career planning process, the system opens the door for career awareness, college and career exploration, and supports preparation for enrollment and transition into postsecondary education and the world of work.

“Today we are announcing an expanded online system that will provide all high school students with information about career opportunities in our state, and the education required to be successful in career opportunities that await them,” Beebe said. “If we are successful in getting students engaged and excited about developing a strategic plan for their future, great things will happen for them, and for Arkansas.”

Employed by Arkansas community colleges, the College and Career Coaches will work directly in the high schools, alongside guidance counselors, to help advise and prepare students for career exploration, college planning and enrollment. They began their work on January 4.

“With our expanded college scholarship programs, coupled with the Arkansas Universal Scholarship Application, Arkansas is chipping away at the barriers to higher education enrollment,” said Beebe. “Our timing is right as more than 60% of America’s fastest growing jobs require a postsecondary degree. Students must understand that only 8% growth will occur in jobs that only require a high school diploma.”

The Governor went on to say that recent interviews conducted with high school students across the state clearly demonstrated a strong desire to attend college, while less than 25% of these students knew how to get there.

States like Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia have been using the internet-based system, powered by Kuder®, with great success. Data from these states indicate significant gains in enrollment in postsecondary institutions and completion of higher education degrees.

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The College and Career Planning System can be accessed by all Arkansans at <http://www.arworks.arkansas.gov> or by calling 1-866-ARWORKS (1-866-279-6757). Participants must visit a Workforce Development Center to receive login information.